No 32 Dr. P. 16

Dr. P

Mr Price Market above 9th.

An
Inaugural Dissertation
on
Hydrocephalus Acutus.
Submitted
to the Passed March 9th
Examination 1827
of the
Trustees and Medical faculty,
of the
University of Pennsylvania;
For
The Degree
of
Doctor of Medicine,
by
Samuel A Baxton.
Nov. 1826

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Hydrocephalus Acutus.

This disease may be strictly ranked among those, which are designated by the title of opprobria medicorum; and one, which has occupyed the attention of some of the most able Medical Authors, and has been investigated with that accuracy of observation and minuteness of research, particularly characteristic of those, whose names stand high in the Annals of Medical Science; but the melancholly instances that occur daily, evince their labours have not been attended with success, and that its true pathology yet remains in obscurity, and we may look forward to some more fortunate, and

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perhaps American, practitioner, to immortalize himself, by establishing a true theory relative to its pathology, and a correct mode of treatment.

In the present instance I shall not presume to offer much original matter, but shall give a detail of certain facts admitted by Authors, and the most approved plan of treatment.

Though Hydrocephalus Internus is generally divided into acute and chronic, yet in this essay I shall only consider the acute form.

The Etiology of this disease is generally involved in considerable obscurity; frequently however it may be traced to some external injury done to the head, as from falls; blows &c

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Or to some great and long continued irritation; as of dentition; worms in the alimentary canal; collections of acid faces, from long continued constipation; schirhus tumours or excrescences within the skull; an original laxity or weakness in the brain, may sometimes have produced it.

It mostly attacks children; and females about commencing menstruation appear to be more subject to it, than at any subsequent period.

In fact it is rare for it to commence an attack after twelve or fourteen years of age. Professor Chapman however relates a case, which fell under his own observation, of a lady, who upon removing to the country, had caught a severe cold, about commen-

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-ency, or rather at the period of menstru-
-ation; the flow was checked, and she
experienced a violent attack of the dis-
-ease. In children when the head has
received no injury, the same professor
believes it to have, as well as most
other infantile diseases, its origin in
the prima via; that this is highly
probable, there are the strongest rea-
-sons for believing; for neither we be-
-lieve with Rush, that in the first
stage, it is only a lesser degree of that
action which produces Phrenitis, and
in the 2d, only a lesser degree of that
action which in adults, produces
apoplexy; or with Darwin, that
this owing to inactivity or torpor of
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It is not sufficient to [illegible] [illegible], as in a majority of cases to "original [illegible] or weakness of the [illegible]", because we see the most [illegible] and healthy children attacked with it, while those who have [illegible] of parent "[illegible]" and debility [illegible] they the [illegible] stages of Infancy and childhood [illegible] [illegible] [illegible];

It is [illegible] general [illegible] and debility [illegible] [illegible] length of time, without any [illegible] of it.

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When these are in contact
begin in diseased cases to
supply in the place of healthy
bone, and thus the position in
most cases is that of the cells
being perhaps completely obliterated
or very imperfect and the peri-
-osteum of the contiguous surfaces
becomes, being of a glassy and
red colour, with frequent vascular
processes, having the appearance
of skin having been grafted upon
bone, serve to show great derange-
-ment there.

In many cases of dis-
-location and a portion of diseased
bone can be discovered exposed
by bending it, except in the
vertebræ.

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extreme cases, when death must inevitably take place without the application of the remedy.

What would be the effect of purging with some of the most drastic cathartics, and producing an irritation in the alimentary canal, amounting almost to inflamation? by becoming a centre of fluxion, it would probably relieve the vessels of the head: but I confess it wants confirmation, as it is with me a mere suggestion.

I shall now conclude ~~with~~ the History and treatment of this disease, and shall only further observe, that the views I have taken of its pathology, I derived from the Professors of Institutes; and, from a thorough examination of medical authors,

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have adopted it, as the most reasonable theory, and according best with the present received doctrine of diseases.

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